A letter from Bob DePugh to the general membership

on the

PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE OF THE MINUTEMEN ORGANIZATION

Dear Fellow Patriots:

On September 21 I will go to trial here in New Mexico on charges of violating the National Gun Control Act of 1968. If found guilty I may be sentenced to as much as ninety years in the penitentiary. I won't be the only one to lose. The American people will also lose a very important round in the fight to preserve their right to keep and bear arms.

Win or lose, I personally have already given up a great deal that was very dear to me. During the past ten years, I have gradually lost my home, the presence of my family, my business, many of my friends and now my personal freedom. This is the price I have paid to organize the Minutemen and to keep that organization in existance in spite of ten years continuous harassment, both from various communist organizations and from certain forces within our own federal bureaucracy. It is only natural therefore, that I ask myself again, "What has the organization really accomplished in the past?-- and what will it be able to accomplish in the future?"

During the five months I was in solitary confinement at Leavenworth Penitentiary, I couldn't help but occasionally find myself asking other questions:

"Is my cause really a just cause?" When I remember the words of the Declaration of Independence and the Gettysburg Address, I can confidently answer-- yes, my cause is just.

"Am I having to pay too high a price?" When I think of our young men who have come back from Vietnam without legs, without arms, without eyes, and of those who won't come back at all-- I know the price I pay is a small one.

"Is there any logical reason to keep on fighting against such enormous odds?" Of this I have never had any doubt. Of course we must keep fighting. Why? Because it is the only honorable thing to do.

No doubt most of our members feel the same way about these things-- and yet, all would probably appreciate a frank and honest appraisal as to just what chance we have to survive as a national organization and to contribute significantly in the achievement of our announced goals: the restoration of our constitutional republic, the defense of individual freedom and the preservation of our American heritage.

Certainly it would not be fair to compare the inefficiency of the Minutemen with the efficiency of the FBI. After all, the FBI has an annual budget of over 50 million dollars. They have the prestige, man power, legal foundation, equipment and everything else they need to look and be a highly effective organization.

In similar manner, it would hardly be fair to compare the limited accomplishments of the Minutemen with the various organizations of the left. They too have almost unlimited financial backing, from both foreign and domestic sources.

The only fair method of judging the past accomplishments of the Minutemen is to compare them with the results of other conservative organizations.

How many conservative organizations are there today that were in existance ten years ago? Not over 50. Of these, how many are larger now than they were ten years ago? Perhaps a dozen at most. Of this number, how many have survived without the protection of claiming tax exempt status as a religious or educational organization? --only two or three. And how many have actually carried out offensive operations against the enemy? --one, the Minutemen.

Many times in the past we've seen some state coordinator decide he could do things a better way, then pull off from the national organization to form his own group. Few of those splinter groups have ever continued as separate organizations more than six or eight months. If there is a "better way" of running the Minutemen organization, then so far, no one else has found it.

To have survived ten long years of slander, infiltration, sell-outs, frame-ups and entrapments-- and still function as a nation wide organization-- is an achievement which very few can fully appreciate.

During this time we have learned many lessons and we have learned them the hard way-- the only way they really can be learned is by personal experience. These are lessons that other would-be guerrilla leaders in the U.S.A. have yet to learn.

When people like Al Summerford, Jessie Stephens, Ken Vier, Art Williams, "Col." William Gale, John Zemanek, etc. criticize the national leaders of the Minutemen as amateurs and try to pawn themselves off as the real professionals-- they are spinning fairy tales.

How many of these people have had the experience of trying to maintain morale and discipline among a group of typical American citizens while hiding in this country from the police and military forces of this government? American conservatives are considerably different from the coolies of Korea or the natives of the Philippines and there is no comparison of the problems involved.

How many of these people have had to solve the communications problem of directing a nation wide organization while hiding out themselves for seventeen months? None. But I can tell them this, very little that has been learned from or written about underground operations in other countries is of any value here.

What other national leader has proven his loyalty to the cause by pursuing his objectives so far that he ended up in prison? Naturally some will say "It wasn't DeHugh's loyalty that put him in jail-- it was his own stupidity". Well, that's easy enough for

someone to say who is still working at a regular job every day and sleeping in his own bed every night.

During the year since my arrest, a dozen different people have proclaimed "The national Minutemen organization has ceased to exist! No use sending any more dues to Norborne! Concentrate on the local group!"

Some local leaders, on seeing how other members have been sent to prison on trumped up charges, have decided, "I think we can operate more effectively (they mean safely) as an independent group."

Both attitudes have drawn away some support from the national organization. Even worse, the actions of these people are in direct opposition to one of the proven rules of resistance warfare: that a resistance movement never achieves its greatest effect against the enemy untill it first achieves unity within itself. Either these false leaders and pink panty patriots don't know how to fight the enemy effectively-- or they really don't want to.

To those who have followed these false leaders as they have formed their little splinter groups, I pose this question: If these men were not loyal to me when I got in trouble, what makes you think they will ever back you up when you get in trouble?

These events of the past year were not unexpected and in the long run the organization will be stronger for having separated the strong from the weak, the brave from the timid, the loyal from the disloyal.

The fact remains that the Minutemen organization is more experienced, more effective and fifty, times larger than any other similar organization in this country-- and is still growing.

Shortly after my trial here in New Mexico a new organizational policy and a new set of national officers will be announced. The genuine Minutemen organization will continue to use P.O. Box 68, Norborne, Missouri, 64668 as its national headquarters mailing address.

Personally, I have no doubt that the Minutemen will survive organizationally till the final battle is won. We will never surrender-- for those who remain with us are the strong, the brave and the loyal.

Anyone who thinks they can build a worthwhile organization from our discards is welcome to try.

Keep up the fight!

Robert I. DePugh